



Professional sports teams are an integral part of many communities. However, since 1950, there have been over 50 franchise moves in the four major sports leagues. In many of these moves, team owners instigate pitched battles between local communities over placement of teams. Communities often have to pay millions of dollars to coax teams from one city to another, sometimes at the expense of other vital city services.

Because professional sports teams can be so vital to the identity of a community, many communities have taxed themselves and provided financial incentives for stadiums, infrastructure improvements, and other enticements to team owners. However, the decision of whether or not to move a team ultimately rests in the hands of the relatively few individuals who are team owners.

The sale of the Los Angeles Dodgers baseball team and the NBA lockout of 2011 are at the roots of the reintroduction of the [Give Fans a Chance Act of 2011](#) . The arbitrary and sudden uprooting of teams from communities where they are a vital part of identity and civic pride can be devastating. These communities should have the right to keep their teams where they are, without the fear of having them moved solely for the profit of the owners.

## Solution

The [Give Fans a Chance Act of 2011](#) , first introduced in 1997, gives communities a voice

when sports team owners attempt to relocate or eliminate a team. Because many professional sports teams are part of the fabric of communities' identities, fans, not just franchise owners, should have a say in the future of their teams. This legislation would require that owners give 180 days' notice of their intention to move a sports franchise, and allow members of the community or other interests the opportunity to make proposals to buy the team during that period. It also would allow the league to play a greater role in determining whether the team can be moved using factors such as community involvement and whether there is a viable offer to buy the team in the community where it resides.

The Green Bay Packers are a great example of how public ownership of a sports franchise can be a success. The Packers were founded in 1919 and, in 1950, the fans saved the team from bankruptcy through a public stock offering. Not only did the fans prevent outside interests from buying the team and potentially moving it, but the incredibly strong community investment and involvement has allowed the team from NFL's smallest city to consistently sell out the stadium for over 50 years and win 13 NFL championships.

The [Give Fans a Chance Act of 2011](#) puts power back in the hands of fans and communities to determine the future of their sports teams, and helps prevent the pillaging of cities' sports franchises for purely financial reasons.



